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Viewing cable 09MELBOURNE114, AUSTRALIAN BANDAID DIPLOMACY IN INDIA

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MELBOURNE114**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09MELBOURNE114	2009-10-20 02:22	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Consulate Melbourne

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/article1582571.ece>

VZCZCXRO3030
RR RUEHPT
DE RUEHBN #0114/01 2930222
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 200222Z OCT 09
FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5011
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0082
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3656
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0037
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0012
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 1623
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 2142
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF EDUCATION WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MELBOURNE 000114

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IN](#) [AS](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN BANDAID DIPLOMACY IN INDIA

REF: A. MELBOURNE 89

[1](#)B. MELBOURNE 65

Classified By: Justin Kolbeck, Pol/Econ Officer for reason 1.4 b

Summary

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Three high level visits to India by Australian officials have had only a limited impact on cooling tempers still hot from a spike in violence against Indian students in Melbourne. Despite recent troubles and a historically inconsistent relationship, both India and Australia are making noises about deepening their engagement with one another. End Summary.

Three Tickets to India, Please

[1](#)2. (U) Responding to an uptick in violence against a number of Australia's approximately 70,000 Indian students (ref. B), Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Victoria Premier John Brumby visited India separately in August and September. During a five day visit in late August/early September, Gillard, who is also Australia's Education Minister, met with several Indian officials including Indian PM Singh with whom she reaffirmed in general terms Australia's commitment to forge closer ties with India. She also met with Kapil Sibal, India's Minister for Human Resources Development and committed to an annual ministerial dialogue to address common education concerns. Brumby conducted a similar visit in late September, meeting with the Indian Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Minister Sibal and others. Foreign Minister Stephen Smith also visited India in early October.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Former Australian Consul General to Mumbai, Shabbir Wahid told us on October 7 that Gillard's visit was a "wasted opportunity." According to Wahid, Gillard focused too narrowly on her Education Minister portfolio, coming away from her meeting with PM Singh with only vague commitments to closer bilateral collaboration and a proposal to establish an Australian university in India. Wahid went on to say that Australian-Indian relations have too long revolved around the "three shared C's:" curry, cricket and Commonwealth; Australia is missing significant commercial opportunities in India due to its failure to engage more broadly with India.

[1](#)4. (C/NF) Victoria's Treasurer John Lenders told Consul General on October 8 that Brumby's trip was similarly ineffective. While the visit was "necessary" due to the increasing plight of Indian international students in Melbourne, Lenders said it has failed to diminish strong negative press in India. The Victorian government has responded to the attacks by increasing police numbers on the streets, stiffening penalties for violent assaults and cracking down on scam vocational schools. Lenders noted that despite these measures, bad press continues and Australia will likely have to wait it out.

Look East

[1](#)5. (SBU) Anita Nayar, India's Consul General to Melbourne, described her country's relations with Australia as historically "on and off again" during an October 8 speech entitled "Rescuing our Relations with India." According to Nayar, relations between the two countries have never been consistent and hit a low point in the 1990s when Australia withdrew its High Commissioner and imposed stiff sanctions on India following Delhi's successful test of a nuclear warhead. Since then, Australia has remained on the periphery of Indian foreign relations. The last Indian Prime Minister to visit Australia was Rajiv Gandhi in 1984. (Comment: Former Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Rajiv Gandhi maintained a close personal friendship. End comment.) More recently,

Australia's continuing refusal to sell India uranium remains an irritant.

¶6. (SBU) According to Nayar, India's Look East policy has led to a recent recognition of Australia's leadership role in

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Asia. India opened a consulate in Melbourne just two years ago and is examining opening consulates in Perth and Brisbane. Australia is now the second most popular destination for Indian students and exports are growing between the two countries. Despite all this, Nayar said relations between India and Australia continue to lack a strategic vision and the necessary political capital to move relations to the next level.

Comment

¶7. (C/NF) Prime Minister Singh has described India and Australia as "two countries with so much in common, but so little to do with one another." This trend is changing whether the two countries like it or not. India is dependent on Australian coking coal and Indian international students are becoming increasingly important to the Australian economy. India and Australia have both expressed a desire to engage more closely, but it is still early days for renewed relations between the two nations.

THURSTON